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THE DIRECTOR.

No. 13. SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1807.

Φανερὸν, ὅτι δύναται ποιόν τι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος ἡ Μουσικὴ παρασκευάζειν

ARIST.

It is manifest that Music is capable of producing a permanent effect, in forming the character of the soul.

To the Director.

SIR,

THOSE persons certainly entertain a very mean and degrading opinion of the polite arts, who consider them merely as subservient to amusement, or at most to that cultivation of mind which,

Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

THE history of the world evinces that they have all a natural and close alliance

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with morality and religion. The Muses, though not themselves goddesses, as the Heathen superstition made them, are handmaids even to the worship of the true God; and will be found in their most lovely appearance attending on the altar, and enlivening the energies of devotion. Of Music in particular, I am inclined to think, not only that her best, but that her most appropriate employment is of this kind; and that she is never so truly in her element, as when she is soothing the passions, or elevating the religious feelings, of human beings. As an art of imitation, Music, undoubtedly, ranks very low. Her resemblances are imperfect, but her sympathies are complete. She cannot paint a battle; but she can give dignity, and even sublimity, to the thanksgiving after it; nor can the difference be shewn more strongly, than by comparing the efforts made in each way. It is in proportion to the merit of the Battle of Prague, by Kotzwara, in comparison with the Dettingen Te Deum of Handel.

THE gratification which the sense of hearing receives from the immediate effect of sweet sounds, must, indeed, be allowed to be considerable; and the human voice, above all instruments of sound, is so calculated to convey delight to the human sense, that perhaps no gratification of mere perception, is at all comparable to that, which is produced on well-formed ears by the notes of Farinelli, a Billington, or a Catalani. The natural melodies of the nightingale are heard with rapture by old and young, civilized and barbarous; yet to shew how the moral feeling insinuates itself with Music, even when the singer is no moral agent, the poets have, with one consent, agreed to attribute passions to the nightingale, to which she doubtless is a stranger; and have supposed that she laments her young, or laments herself; though, probably, in those sounds, which we think plaintive, she only calls her mate, or gives vent to the liveliness of health. Yet the fiction vibrates on

the human heart, and therefore has always succeeded.

Where the moral influence of Music is wholly disregarded, as in the case of those low professors, who degrade it into a trade, or of those unthinking dilettanti who give their whole time to it, as an idle and expensive luxury, nature seems to take revenge on the abuse, by joining with it a proportionable degradation of character; and a profligate fiddler and a fiddling gentleman are very often fit company only for each other. But it is far otherwise with the inventors, or as they may rightly be styled the Poets of this divine art; who frequently exemplify in their conduct the moral and religious effects, which they are accustomed so powerfully to communicate by their compositions. Examples might be cited in great numbers; and probably the recollection of most readers will supply some from memory or observation. Suffice it to say that Handel

was as deeply religious in his mental habits, as he was devout in his sacred compositions; nor, except the foible of indulgence at the table, is any stigma left upon his memory.

I AM not prepared, with Scriblerus, to credit all that some of the ancients have told, respecting the moral influence of Music; nor do I expect it to quiet a mob, any more than to unite a broken bone. I am even willing to confess, that, under any state of society which we have witnessed, or can readily conceive, the refinement of the Lacedæmonians, in making it penal to add a new string to the lyre, as a species of luxury, or an engine of corruption, appears as much too delicate, as the total neglect of such tendencies is too unfeeling. But that, on minds already well disposed, much effect of a moral, and still more of a religious kind, may be produced by Music, is a proposition which I must ever support, as full of truth and utility.

THE very curious fragment of Philodemus, the fourth book of his work on Music, which has been published from a MS. found at Herculaneum *, proves that the Epicureans were great sceptics, with regard to the then generally acknowledged powers of Music. His first chapter, as divided by the modern editor, has for its title the assertion, "that Music has no power to inform the mind†." He seems to be equally an infidel respecting its religious uses, and the tales which history or tradition then recorded of its wonders, as employed by Thales, Terpander, and others. But the Epicureans, like other sceptics, went too far, and doubted, not only what was really problematical, like the tales in question, but also facts, which reason can solve, and observation will always confirm.

* Under the title of "Herculanensium Voluminum Tomus I," with the learned notes of Carlo Rosini.

† "Nullam esse Musicam quæ ad animos informandos sit idonea."

That Music is an aid to devotion, the practice of all nations, in all ages, must establish beyond controversy; that it can sooth grief and exhilarate low spirits, who that has an ear for melody, or a heart to feel, has not experienced? That it enlivens what was gay before, and can make even buffoonery tolerable, who, that has heard it at a feast, or at a pantomime, will venture to deny? Its martial effects every regimental band will testify; and few hearers are so low in spirit, as not to have felt a kind of inspiration of courage, from the sounds of a march, or the notes of a patriotic air. On the other hand, the lover, in every climate, seeks its aid, as if by instinct. If facts of this sort, are too notorious to bear an exemplification, which would lead at once to the most trite topics*, what a scope must there be, within the

* Who has not heard the effects of "the *Rance des Vaches*, among the Swiss, or the *Pibroch*, among the Highlanders? Or, what Englishman has not felt the animation produced by, *God save the King*, or, *Rule, Britannia?*

power of music, for effects the most salutary to the human mind; from the exhilaration of the jig, to the sublimity of the anthem; from the insinuation of tender passion, to the excitement of martial ardour.

Without having recourse therefore to any fables, we may pronounce, without hesitation, that music is unjustly treated, when it is considered as calculated for mere amusement; and that it has much higher offices to perform, which neither they who compose it with genius, nor they who hear it with judgment and discrimination, should ever discard from their attention. There is no occasion for the supporter of this opinion, to deny that, by union with words, the moral, or to speak more generally, the mental effects of Music are greatly heightened. It is perfectly true; and the very capacity to admit this union is one of the greatest glories of Music. If a picture, or a statue, could be made to speak, with propriety or effect, would

it not be a much more perfect work of art than it is? Music therefore which *can* speak, and by the aid of words *does* speak to the very soul, is, for that especial reason, to be held in so much the higher estimation.

No man felt the dignity of Music more than Handel; since no man, probably, ever felt to such a degree, the sublimity of its powers. He has consecrated to perpetual veneration both those powers and his own genius, in his glorious composition, called MESSIAH, in which the words are those of real, and the Music of apparent inspiration: and both together are worthy, if we may say so without presumption, to be sung by angels and glorified spirits.

As an example which includes all others, permit me to dwell, before I conclude, on the particulars of the Oratorio now mentioned. I am persuaded, and have long felt the persuasion, that, by developing its merits to the public, in this

point of view, I shall render an essential service to morals and religion.

THE words of this sacred Oratorio were compiled, entirely from texts of scripture, by Mr. Charles Jennens, of Gopsal, in Leicestershire, whose co-operation Handel enjoyed on other occasions. The words are selected with a judgment which nothing can exceed; and present to our contemplation, in the three parts of the drama, three great divisions of our SAVIOUR'S History, His *Advent*, His *Passion*, and His *Glorification*. The ADVENT is introduced by the most striking predictions relating to it, from Isaiah, Haggai, and other prophets. His birth is told, partly in the same prophetic language, and partly in the words of the gospel, which relates the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, on the morn of the nativity. In the second part, which represents the PASSION of our Saviour, he is first solemnly announced in the words of John Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!"

Then follow the most distinguished prophecies of his humiliation; afterwards the publishing of the gospel, the vain resistance of earthly powers, and the final prevalence on earth of "the kingdom of the Lord, and of his Christ." The third part opens with the general resurrection, told in the sublime words of Job, and of St. Paul; the justification of the righteous through Christ; and the final triumph of the Lamb, in the expressions of the angelic choir, as revealed to St. John; and the united praise of "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the seas, and all that are in them," recorded in the same vision.

Such an assemblage of magnificent images, from prophecy and inspired history, required the utmost force of human genius, united with sincere devotion, to give it expression in Music; and happily this rare union was found complete in Handel. With all the fire and sublimity of Milton, to conceive the

imagery attached to sacred words, he had a knowledge and comprehension of the power and effects of musical sounds, whether simple or complex, which nothing could exceed. He seems to have undertaken the task with enthusiasm, and to have performed it, as if under the influence of actual inspiration. These, Sir, are not the expressions of partiality. I have no bigotry. I can relish every species of Music, which any one can justly pronounce good in its kind; from the simplest ballad, to the most complicated *bravura* of the opera; from the plain minuet or gavot, to the most beautiful extravagancies of the fanciful Haydn. I have heard, with delight, the sacred music of the old Italian masters; the Masses of Pergolesi and Leo, the Anthems of Marcello and Palestrina. There is no author of celebrity among our own composers of cathedral Music, from Tye to Kent, whose merits I have not in turn acknowledged. But, Sir, to feel the whole excellence of Handel's Oratorio Music, it is not sufficient to have ears, and to have

cultivated the habit of listening with them: there are sentiments and feelings of the soul, which he possessed, and well knew how to communicate; but which cannot be received where the mind is not prepared. But, where any congenial dispositions exist, I have no doubt in saying, that no eloquence of an Augustine or a Chrysostom, could so powerfully excite the genuine feelings of devotion, as the strains of Handel, united to the words of scripture.

Allow me, for the sake of illustration, to dwell more minutely on the great example I have thus introduced.

The Oratorio of Messiah is, I am entirely convinced, as perfect a composition of the kind, as the faculties of human nature are capable of producing. Even the Overture *, which is not at all

* The reader who wishes to see a professional analysis of this oratorio, written with great musical skill, is referred to page 70 of Dr. Burney's Account of the Commemoration of Handel. The account here

formed to captivate the common ear, has a sober grandeur, which prepares the mind for the sacred strains that are to follow. It is a foreground, whose colouring is purposely kept down, that it may relieve, rather than interfere with, the splendour of the picture. The subject of the Oratorio is then opened by an accompanied recitative, which, singers much inferior to Mr. Harrison have felt, can never be delivered without effect. It is comfort and pardon, offered by Divine Mercy, with no less tenderness than dignity; and the preparation of the way of the Lord is so announced, as to give perfect life to the words of the prophet. The air which follows, continues the idea of preparation, and touches, rather than attempts to imitate, the removal of the obstacles. The declaration, that the "Glory of the Lord shall be revealed," is then made, in choral music, short and simple; but whether more sublime or beautiful cannot easily be decided. The

given was purposely written without reference to it, but receives the strongest confirmation from it.

delivery of the words, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," is peculiarly grand and appropriate. Another recitative accompanied, to the words, "Thus saith the Lord," now follows. It is given to a base voice, and has all the dignity which the solemn declaration demands. The setting of the words, "even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in," and of those that follow, "behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts," is stamped with the strongest impression of genius. The next air is expressive chiefly of alarm, and agitation, at the idea of our inability to "abide the day of his coming." The very simple recitative, "Behold a virgin shall conceive," is only the more noble for its simplicity; and good tidings have seldom been related with more animation than in the ensuing song, "O thou that tellest, &c." Of a very different character are the subsequent recitative accompanied, and song; which are among those efforts of genius, wherein this great master has contrived to paint darkness by its mental effects,

the production of uncertainty and hesitation. The light then rises out of it, with clearness and simplicity. The birth of the Saviour is next declared, in a chorus, which seems to carry the powers of music to their highest elevation, though it is afterwards to be surpassed in the same work. The proclamation of his mysterious names, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," is such as almost to compel infidelity itself to bow with adoration!

But what words can do justice to the sweetness of the pastoral symphony, which introduces the narrative of the shepherds? It is like the famous *natale* of Corelli, beyond a doubt; at the same time that it has characters of its own, and particularly avoids the chromatics, which rather overseason the intermediate passages of that justly admired composition. We are then led through a judicious mixture of recitative, air, and accompaniment, to the actual appearance

of the angels; whose sublime choral hymn, "Glory to God in the highest," seems hardly unworthy of such singers, or of such an occasion. The contrast of the words, "and peace on earth," is what every hearer must have felt to produce the most admirable effect; and the gradual retiring of the angels into heaven is inimitable. The joy of Zion on the occasion is expressed in an air, which once, and I believe only once, was sung by Mara, at the commemoration of Handel: and well do I remember, that the energy of animation with which she delivered the words, "rejoice greatly," and "shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!" was such as to draw tears, analogous to tears of joy, from almost every eye. Nothing but tears could express or give vent to the thrilling effect, which such words, such music, and such singing irresistibly produced. Nothing very characteristic marks the next recitative; but the *Siciliana* song which follows, on the words, "He shall feed his flock," has enchanted every ear, by its pastoral elegance, from

the time of its composition. The concluding chorus of this part is short, and animated; well expressing the words, "His yoke is easy and his burden light."

The second part opens with a chorus, grave, and grand, such as the sufferings of the Lamb of God, next to be described, demand. The effect of beginning with a chorus is in itself peculiarly fine. The pathetic air, "he was despised *," leads us to another chorus, still more solemn, "surely he hath borne our griefs." A third, of a different character, is again accumulated upon this; the first part of which beautifully represents the wild wanderings of human nature, without the Redeemer; the second expresses the solemn act of laying our iniquities upon him. The passion of Christ is then described, with the circumstances attending it, the scoffs of his enemies, and

* In the second part of this air, Handel, it must be confessed, has attempted a kind of imitative expression, by which he was now and then seduced; the effect of which is not good.

the sorrow of his own soul. The deep effect of the recitative accompanied, "thy rebuke hath broken his heart," followed by the air, "Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow," is such as very seldom has or can be equalled. Norris of Oxford, far from a first rate singer, in many respects, was justly famed for his delivery of these two compositions; and they who remember him will testify, that the effect was touching in a high degree; surpassed only by his delivery of the famous recitative in Jephtha, where the father pronounces sentence on the daughter. From this depth of sorrow, we are gently led by a short recitative accompanied, and the placid, soothing air, "But thou didst not leave his soul in hell." The responsive chorus, which follows on the words, "Lift up your heads, O ye, gates," is such an instance of dialogue in music, as could hardly have been thought practicable, till the genius of this great composer undertook it; the sublime solemnity that is intermixed

with the liveliness of the responses, leaves nothing for the mind to wish in the effect.

THE airs and choruses that follow, through the chief of this part, are not so peculiarly marked as the preceding; but they are contrasted with the opening, as being generally expressive of the joy diffused by the preaching of the gospel. The most remarkable is the base song, "Why do the Heathen so furiously rage together?" which is full of spirit and animation. But, as if the author had reserved all his powers to express the complete establishment of the reign of Christ on earth, the concluding chorus of this part is written in a style that defies all comparison. "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" has electrified the most insensible bosoms; and has filled others with a transport of sublime feeling, almost too powerful to be sustained. If any thing can go beyond the effect of proclaiming the Saviour, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," with al-

ternate bursts of "Hallelujah," it is the sudden and unexpected relief produced, by the transition to the mild and tranquil subject given to the words, "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." Such an effect of contrast was perhaps never produced, in any other instance; and the rising of the storm of sublimity again, out of this calm, carries the impression not only as high as it can be conceived, but as high as it can well be borne.

After such an effort in concluding his second part, any author but Handel would have found it impossible to sustain the remaining interest of his composition. He has effected it, most happily, by having recourse to the inexhaustible variety of his powers, and by producing something so different from all which had preceded, that the mind is drawn away even from the recollection of it. The incomparable air, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," is in all its parts so

fine, that even a common singer cannot easily destroy its effect: but when sung as Mrs. Bates or Mara sung it, approaches as nearly to the perfection of the solemn style, as imagination can go. Even the ritornello, "for now is Christ risen," is not neglected, nor without its appropriate effect. The double contrast in the following chorus, "since by man came death," is no less sublime than original; and the opposite states of man by nature, and by redemption, cannot be more happily illustrated. The grand recitative, "Behold I tell you a mystery," and the animated song of, "the trumpet shall sound," with its very difficult, but truly beautiful, trumpet accompaniment, still shew that new contrasts are continually in the power of this composer. The duet, the short chorus, and the air that follow, particularly the latter, are full of beauties. But as if to prove that the sublimity of the author's conceptions can never flag or fail, he has given us, in his concluding chorus, what eclipses almost all that had been heard

before. It is in a manner, four choruses, in one. The profoundly solemn subject, which expresses the words, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," is relieved very soon by the more lively enumeration of particulars, "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom," &c. Then a third subject opens, in a fugue of such animation as cannot be surpassed, to the words, "blessing and honour, glory and power;" and when the hearer supposes that this effort must have concluded every attempt to gratify him, and that nothing can remain, this invincible genius leads off with an entirely new subject in the "Amen," of such richness and sublimity in the melodies, and harmonies, in the contrast of the voices, and of the instruments, that he leaves his audience almost transported in imagination to the symphonies of Heaven.

After having said so much, I must not add many remarks. The view now taken of this noble composition will surely suffice to shew how much of men-

tal sentiment is mixed with its effects; how large a share of them is produced by contrast and succession: and consequently, how much the songs and choruses must lose, when they are torn from their connexion, to be performed in miscellaneous concerts, to which they bear no kind of relation. The same may be said of almost all the fine parts of Handel's Oratorios. They are fine in themselves, but their value is almost infinitely enhanced, by their relative situation in their original places. This observation, as belonging to the moral or mental effect of music, may serve for a final illustration of my whole subject; and is so true, that even the "Hallelujah" chorus may almost be heard with indifference, when preceded by common fiddlings; or the tricks either of vocal or instrumental extravagance.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

TIMOTHEUS.

Royal Institution.

In the beginning of his *eighth* lecture *on dramatic poetry*, Mr. Crowe gave some account of the alterations which were introduced into the English theatre, soon after the Restoration. The Court patronized the stage, and poets wrote to please the taste of the Court. This led to a nearer imitation of the French drama than had been usual. He stated the particulars in which this imitation appeared; and next he animadverted on the indecency and immorality which disgraced our stage at that period. He also noted other faults in the tragedies of our chief authors in that age, Lee, Otway, and particularly the extravagancies of Dryden in his heroic plays. As a contrast to these, he quoted the Samson Agonistes of Milton, and observed that Johnson's criticism upon that drama was prejudiced and unjust.

His *ninth* lecture commenced with

noticing the effect which was produced by J. Collier's book, intitled, 'A short View of the Stage:' not long after which the Tatler and Spectator contributed to improve the taste of the age. He observed that from this time our tragic authors wrote with more caution, and paid a stricter attention to the rules of criticism. He shewed in what respects they did this; viz. in the choice of their subjects, and in the subordinate parts of the drama; and he referred to the tragedy of Cato as an instance. He then characterized the tragedies of Rowe, Young, A. Hill, Thomson, and others, particularly Lillo, and his play, intitled, 'Fatal Curiosity.' In the conclusion he spoke of the style of modern tragedy, which he censured as departing too far from the language of real life, and as not being sufficiently appropriated to the respective characters to whom it is assigned.

In Mr. Wood's *eighth* lecture *on perspective,* the doctrine of inclined planes

was repeated as introductory to that of shadows. The projection of shadows by a torch or candle and by the sun, was exemplified, and shadows were proved to be subject to the same rules of perspective as all other objects: and the lecture concluded with reflection in water, in which it was proved, that the reflection will always be equal to the apparent magnitude of the original object.

Mr. DAVY's *tenth* lecture *on the chemical phenomena of nature* related to the atmosphere. Its composition was pointed out; its constituent parts exhibited; water, carbonic acid, oxygene, and nitrogene. Mr. Davy stated the proportion of carbonic acid at about $\frac{1}{100}$, the oxygene as $\frac{21}{100}$, and the nitrogene as $\frac{79}{100}$; these quantities he considered as the same in all parts of the air exposed to the influence of winds in cities, in towns, in mountains, and in valleys, on great continents, and upon the ocean. He attributed the superior salubrity of the air in the country as compared with that of

towns, to its being free from noxious effluvia.

British Gallery.

No. 100. The foot-path bridge.
R. Westall.

THIS is a delightful little bit of rural scenery, and executed in a very natural style. The old woman seated at the foot of the bridge, conversing with a young female peasant, adds an interest to the composition. The scene exhibits one of those deep, sequestered, solitary spots, alike fitted for the musing of the poet, and the haunt of the fairy.

Purchased by the Earl of Carlisle.

No. 106. Cupid. J. Pocock.

ALTHOUGH this picture has not yet found a purchaser, it has great claims to original merit. Cupid is represented as a very beautiful boy, of about 12 years of age, sporting with a snake, which, by his presence, seems disarmed of its terrors.

A brilliant butterfly is perched upon his bow; and the arch little god is amusing himself with the animals before him. The expression is excellent; but the colouring, in the naked parts of the boy, is perhaps rather too raw.

No. 115. Cottage child. J. Pocock.

A PLEASING natural composition, and executed with great neatness and delicacy of colouring. The child is sitting down very contentedly to the enjoyment of some milk, which it drinks out of a pan. The legs and feet are well conceived and executed.

Purchased by Lord Boringdon.

MINIATURES.

No. 133. Saint and angel, (enamel, from Carravagio.) H. Bone.

IT seems impossible for the art of enamel painting to go beyond the force and richness of colouring displayed in this picture: and yet there is an hardness

of outline which belongs, perhaps, rather to the original than the copy.

No. 139. Beatrice. A. Chalon.

This is a whimsical composition enough. The head and hands of Beatrice only appear rising above a bush of rose trees; the colouring is rather too dry.

No. 140. Flowers. J. Hewlett.

If Mr. Hewlett continues to paint in this style, England will never have to envy Holland her De Heem and Van Hysum. It is, in truth, a wonderfully executed picture; there is a spirit and richness in the touch, accompanied at the same time, with great warmth and mellowness of effect, which are absolutely enchanting, and bring nature before the eye. When time shall have somewhat softened the brilliancy of the present varnish, these roses, and hyacinths, and lilies, may vie with the most successful similar productions of foreign masters.

Purchased by the Marquis of Stafford.

No. 147. Boy, after Sir J. Reynolds.
H. Bone.

THE original, of which there is a mezzotint engraving, is a very pleasing picture; and Mr. Bone has, in this beautiful effort of his pencil, shewn himself master of all those powers of touch and colouring, which have rendered Sir Joshua's picture so popular.

No. 148. The past, the present, and the coming hour. J. Shelley.

THIS elegant composition consists of three females, of whom the retiring one represents the *past* hour, the central one the *present*, and the approaching one the *coming* hour. The air of gaiety, in the present and coming hour, is happily conceived and executed.

Purchased by J. A. Wright, Esq. M. P.

No. 149. Cynthia. W. Wood.

MR. WOOD has, in this picture, painted a very beautiful countenance of some young lady, encircled by clouds. The head only appears: but this has

abundance of attraction, from the accuracy of its outline, the sweetness of its expression, and the truth of its colouring.

Purchased by Wm. Chamberlayne, Esq.

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